United Nations E/2000/68

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 June 2000

Original: English

Substantive session of 2000
New York, 5 July-1 August 2000
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Information submitted by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on their activities with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

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* E/2000/100.

00-48099 (E) 070700

I. Introduction

1. At its substantive session of 1999, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1999/52 of 29 July 1999 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations.

2. In paragraph 19 of its resolution 54/85 of 6 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the Council to continue to consider, in consultation with the Special Committee, appropriate measures for coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in implementing relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

3. Information submitted by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on their activities in relation to Non-Self-Governing Territories is set out below.

II. Support by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to Non-Self-Governing Territories

4. According to the information provided by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, during the period under review, a number of specialized agencies and organizations have continued to extend assistance to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in response to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee. A number of organizations have extended or formulated such programmes of assistance from within their own budgetary resources, in addition to their respective contributions as executing agencies of projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the primary provider of assistance.

5. A number of assistance projects have continued to be funded by UNDP, in close collaboration with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

A. United Nations Development Programme

Introduction

6. Programmes of technical cooperation are maintained by UNDP with five British dependent Territories of the Caribbean and two Dutch Territories, all of which are currently classified as net contributor countries. These are: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. The programmes vary in content but are all implemented in keeping with UNDP programming and operational rules, including through emphasis on the national execution modality. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board of UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and, in particular, those relating to resource allocation and cooperation with net contributor countries, apply in substance to all aspects of programming with these Territories. Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and decisions of the Economic and Social Council also influence the nature of programme and other relations between UNDP and the dependent Territories.

7. Cooperation between UNDP and the non-independent Territories of the Caribbean has also been influenced by the decisions and outcomes of various United Nations conferences, including the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, convened in 1994; the International Conference on Population and Development, held in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, convened in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women, convened in Beijing in 1995.

8. The programme focus for UNDP, established by the successor programming arrangement and all subsequent decisions of the Executive Board, maintains an overarching emphasis on the promotion of sustainable human development. This objective is attained through thematic focuses in the areas of (a) poverty eradication and social development; (b) job creation and sustainable livelihoods; (c) governance, participation and the empowerment of women; and (d) protection of the environment and natural resource management.

2. Programming arrangements

9. The net contributor country classification of the Caribbean dependent Territories preclude most of them from benefiting from flows of grant assistance from UNDP. In addition, continuing resource constraints faced by the Organization have severely restricted its ability to respond more fully to the technical cooperation needs of the Caribbean dependencies. Under resource allocation arrangements for the current programme cycle, a transitional Target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) has been assigned to Anguilla, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands. Such resource assignments have been made on a reimbursable basis, in accordance with UNDP Executive Board decision 95/23, and expires in 2000. Aruba, the British Virgin Islands and the Netherlands Antilles are Territories that do not benefit from core resource assignment. Therefore, cooperation with the latter Territories is pursued with considerable emphasis on resource mobilization and cost sharing, involving government as well as third-party funding.

10. In addition to their TRAC allocations, some of the territories benefit from the Caribbean component of the UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands currently benefit from the expanded, ongoing regional disaster response and management project for the Caribbean funded by the UNDP Regional Programme. Additional benefits are derived by the Turks and Caicos Islands under the merged support for policy and programme development and support for technical services funding frameworks. In addition, given its membership in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Montserrat will continue to benefit from assistance channelled to the Caribbean multi-island programme. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands will also continue to receive such benefits, based on their associate status with OECS.

11. UNDP is encouraging the use of other global facilities for the benefit of the Territories, such as the technical cooperation among developing countries programme, the partners in development programme and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Furthermore, the UNDP subregional resource facility, based in the UNDP field office in Trinidad and Tobago, was established at the beginning of 1999 to provide enhanced technical backstopping and referral services to country offices serving the needs of Governments of the region. Governments of the Territories covered by UNDP field offices in the Caribbean will benefit from the services now being provided by subregional resource facility.

3. Other areas of assistance

12. UNDP has continued the implementation of areas of support assigned to it from the small island developing States Programme of Action. In particular, the Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDSNET) and the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDSTAP) have become fully operational with benefits to be derived by all small island developing States, including the dependent Territories. The two programmes were created to enhance the flow of sustainable development information among small States, and to provide technical expertise in addressing gaps in technical assistance needs through exchanges among small island developing States and between small island developing States and other States. These programmes should assist in furthering the process of integrating dependent Territories into the global arena.

13. Under the SIDSTAP arrangement, UNDP co-sponsored the convening of a meeting of small island developing States/donor countries in February 1999, to review and assess existing needs for technical assistance support. UNDP actively supported the preparations of project proposals from small island developing States Governments, which provided the basis for discussions in the meeting. Further follow-up actions are required and will necessitate the continued support and involvement of UNDP. Likewise, the implementation of SIDSNET has commenced with a number of training initiatives conducted across the main small island developing States regions. Further training and attachment are earmarked under the ongoing programme for SIDSNET, with financial support from the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Programme.

14. UNDP resident representatives assigned to the Territories have established a system of United Nations focal points within those Governments. This initiative is intended to strengthen dialogue and promote contact between the Territories, UNDP and the rest of the United Nations system. An expected benefit will be increased awareness among officials and the general public in the Territories of the potential for collaboration with the United Nations system. Through

such a mechanism, UNDP can play a greater role in providing policy advice and guidance to the authorities of the Territories within its areas of competence.

15. UNDP has continued to engage in effective policy dialogue with the Governments of several Caribbean Territories, with a view to determining their most critical policy concerns and recommending ways for effectively utilizing assistance provided by the Organization. These functions have been carried out by UNDP resident representatives, who also frequently monitor developments of a social, economic and political nature in the Territories. The formulation of appropriate programmes of technical assistance is based on the processes of consultation and the ongoing review of conditions within each Territory that is undertaken by UNDP.

16. In addition to its role in above-mentioned respects, UNDP maintains critical liaison and coordination with other agencies of the United Nations system. This function has proved beneficial in the determination of needs and the delivery of assistance to the Territories, particularly with respect to emergencies.

4. Focus of assistance

17. The assistance provided by UNDP to the Caribbean dependent Territories in the current programme cycle (1997-2000) has as its principal focus support in the areas of (a) poverty eradication and social development; (b) governance and capacity-building; and (c) environmental management. With this in mind and, given the continuing resource constraints in the implementation of its programmes for net contributor countries, the current UNDP strategy involves the application of available funding in a catalytic manner, with the aim of attracting financing from the programme countries themselves, as well as other donors and the private sector.

18. In view of the significantly reduced flows of development assistance from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Anguilla, the financing of its cooperation programme during the current programme cycle will come mainly from government cost-sharing contributions. The programme, as approved, will concentrate on human resource development and environmental management. UNDP will be expected to provide considerable support to the Government in the area of resource mobilization, in order to maximize the scope, coverage and impact of external support.

19. With regard to the British Virgin Islands, the Territory has received no TRAC allocation for its programme, which will be fully funded from government cost-sharing resources. The current programme of cooperation concentrates on social development and poverty eradication, with particular emphasis on women and children. In addition, some attention will be paid to environment and natural resources management and the strengthening of national disaster-preparedness capability. The latter is being accomplished through support from a project funded by the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme.

20. In the Cayman Islands, UNDP support in the fifth cycle centred mainly on training and human resource development. For the current programme cycle, a country cooperation framework which was formulated for adoption by the UNDP Executive Board was withdrawn at the request of the Government. The main thrust of UNDP support under that proposed programme was intended to be in the area of governance and capacity-building. UNDP is continuing its discussions with the authorities with a view to agreeing on a new focus for its support. It is envisaged, subject to the outcome of the ongoing discussions, that assistance will be framed in the context of priorities outlined in the national "Vision 2008" plan which has been adopted by the Cayman Islands Government and Legislature.

21. Following the series of eruptions of the Montsoufriere volcano in Montserrat, UNDP assisted in the mobilization and deployment of immediate emergency relief and rescue supplies. Financial support for these efforts was provided through the UNDP special programme resources and TRAC 1.1.3 emergency programme. Apart from assisting in financing relief efforts, some funding was applied to supporting housing construction in order to relieve the continuing pressure on emergency shelters in the country. In addition, these resources allowed for providing the Government with much needed technical expertise in a variety of areas, in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers. Several technical needs have been fulfilled to date, by making available United Nations Volunteers expertise in the areas of physical planning, engineering, building management and architectural services. Support for vulnerability

mapping and for strengthening national disaster management and preparedness plans are the principal focuses of a new project approved in 1999. The project attracts funding from the Montserrat Government, the Government of the United Kingdom and UNDP.

22. Regrettably, on account of the Territory's high gross national product (GNP) per capita level, UNDP has been unable to present a case for reversal of its net contributor country status by the Executive Board. However, UNDP contributed to reviewing and commenting on Montserrat's sustainable development plan and participated in discussions for the finalization of the country policy paper with the United Kingdom authorities. A number of areas have been identified for further programme development in the context of a case-by-case approval of projects endorsed by the UNDP Executive Board, as well as in the elaboration of a longer-term cooperation framework. Funding for such a programme also remains a matter to be addressed urgently.

23. In the Turks and Caicos Islands, UNDP technical cooperation support has been directed mainly at establishing the basis for promoting meaningful national development in an externally oriented economy. In this connection, assistance was granted for the establishment of a national investment agency (TCInvest), the creation of a national insurance scheme and in improving customs administration and tertiary level education. UNDP support is currently concentrated in two broad areas, namely, preparation of an integrated development plan and sustainable livelihoods and employment creation linking agriculture and small enterprise development with tourism.

24. The Government of Bermuda has opted to suspend its cooperation with UNDP, because of the net contributor country status that was conferred on it.

25. In Aruba, UNDP assistance contributed to the establishment of the Epidemiology Unit in the Department of Health and in the strengthening of information systems and data-management capacity for the health sector. These projects are ongoing and are being built upon in the implementation of the newly approved country cooperation framework. A strong focus of the new programme, therefore, is on the provision of technical support for capacity-building, particularly in the use of data and data analysis in influencing policy formulation.

26. Support has been provided to the Netherlands Antilles in the areas of capacity-building and public sector reform, assessment of technical assistance support and the streamlining of debt management and management of the country's structural adjustment programme. The finalization of a new country cooperation framework for endorsement by the UNDP Executive Board has been delayed as a result of the prevailing economic and other difficulties facing the country. While the Government has welcomed the technical support provided by UNDP, the fulfilment of this support in the context of a new programme is dependent on securing funding for such a programme from sources other than UNDP.

B. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

27. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) serves as the United Nations focal point for the least developed countries through monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the 1990s. In addition to the least developed countries, it also addresses the needs of the landlocked Territories.

28. The Plan of Action, the final report of the recently completed tenth session of the Conference, held in Bangkok in February 2000, and its mandate for the next four years, drew attention to the importance of a functioning transport sector, as it determines the degree of participation of countries in the global trading system. Inefficient procedures, excessive transport costs or non-availability of connections create a major barrier blocking access to foreign markets. Any attempt to increase the competitiveness of export goods in foreign markets will thus have to address both the cost and quality of land and ocean transport services available to traders in developing countries, and especially landlocked and small island developing countries.

29. The UNCTAD Programme on Training Development in the Field of Maritime Transport (TRAINMAR) trains policy makers and senior managers for maritime trade and port management and helps countries to establish their own management training capacity in support of maritime trade. Some smaller Territories, and in particular Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean, do not have a sufficient range of activities that permit local personnel

to have the wide experience necessary to provide a base for preparing and conducting their own training, without which they risk being disadvantaged in the conduct of foreign trade. To combat this risk, the Programme has taken specific measures to establish an integrated TRAINMAR network in the Caribbean so that all Territories of the region share their training capacities and necessary technical support. While no one country may have sufficient strength to run training alone, the integrated network can provide a response to all training needs. This is particularly relevant to Non-Self-Governing Territories. While the headquarters of the Caribbean network is in Cuba, any Territory of the region can participate in training activities. For instance, Guadeloupe and Martinique are regular participants in network training services in French, while Curacao and Aruba are regular participants of training conducted in English. Through TRAINMAR, and with financial support from France, UNCTAD has made this service available to all Territories of the Caribbean, and in particular for all Non-Self-Governing Territories. The objective is to make these Territories more active in world trade and to enable them better to participate in the opportunities of globalization.

C. United Nations Environment Programme

30. In line with its mandate the United Nations Environment Programme continues to collaborate with agencies and regional institutions in the protection of the global environment. These efforts explicitly or implicitly serve environmental management goals in both the self-governing and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

D. Organization of African Unity

31. At the thirtieth session of Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Tunis from 13 to 15 June 1994, the Organization of African Unity Summit adopted resolution AHG/Res.228(XXX), in which it recognized that the mandate given to the Liberation Committee in 1963 had been satisfactorily accomplished and decided to dissolve that Committee.